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Identification of Contributing Factors in Vehicle Pedestrian Crashes in Chennai using Multiple Correspondence Analysis

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Abstract

In India, 10.5% of total accident death and injury of 2016 are related to pedestrians. Identification of the vehicle, roadways, environment or human factors involved in vehicle pedestrian crashes has become an essential factor in implementing countermeasures. Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), a categorical data analysis technique was used in this study on 2016 vehicle pedestrian accidents from the Road Accident Data Management System (RADMS) database of Chennai city to detect patterns and associations that lead to accidents. This study identifies, two key cluster and six distant clusters of variables to have factors contributing to vehicle pedestrian crashes. The associated variables and its categories found in the key clouds were collision type, cause of accidents, junction control and pedestrian age. The association suggests that, pedestrians in the age group of 25 to 34 are mostly injured in accidents at traffic signals were the cause of accident is usually due to non respect of the right way of rules. Also, driving against the flow of traffic, changing lane without due care and dangerous overtaking were associated with hitting an object. Other non trivial variables identified were time of day, season, availability of central divider, injury severity and speed limit. This technique provides data on the associated pattern and the significance of variables that most likely resulted in pedestrian vehicle crash. Based on the findings, appropriate countermeasures are also suggested that could potentially help transportation safety researches and policy makers towards developing strategies that prevent pedestrian accidents.

Keywords: Pedestrian safety; Multiple Correspondence Analysis; Contributing factors; Pattern identification; Counter measures

1. Introduction

Pedestrian accident has been ranked fourth out of the total road accidents in terms of road users in 2016. According to Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) reports of 2016, pedestrian death and injury amounted to 15,746 (10.5%) and 13,894 (9.5%) in 2015 out of total road traffic accidents. From the total pedestrian

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accidents in 2016, 1.7% (8,298) were considered as to be the fault of the pedestrians. Pedestrian fault has also reported as 2% (3091) of total people killed and 1.5% (7,465) of total people injured in road traffic accidents. MoRTH report considered 13 states in India out of which Tamil Nadu was ranked first in the share of total road accidents (14.9%), and second in terms of the number of people killed in road accidents (11.4%). The number of pedestrian vehicle collision has been taken as one of the major concerns by the policy makers calling for identification and implementation of countermeasures to bring down road fatalities. According to NITI Aayog's three year action agenda of India (2017 to 2020), emphasis is placed on data to monitor accidents and provide direction towards correction plans. RADMS database of Government of Tamil Nadu was designed to map road accidents across the state with a multi department registry involving police, highways and local RTAs.

Recently, many research works has been carried out in understanding the contributing factors of vehicle pedestrian crashes. Out of the total pedestrian accidents majority of them were reported in urban areas, since there is a frequent interaction between pedestrians and vehicles. Liu and Tung (2014) considered parameters such as age, time of day, vehicle speed and pedestrian decision in their study and identified time gap to be the most significant factor that could increase safety while crossing roads. Pedestrian's perception in identifying the approaching vehicles at nighttime was studied by Balasubramanian and Bhardwaj (2018). They suggested fixing an active light source between the headlights of four wheelers as an effective counter measure for faster vehicle identification in poor lighting conditions. A systematic review on environmental factors affecting pedestrian traffic accidents was performed by Moradi et al (2016) based on studies from 1966 to 2015. Out of 2,828 articles, 15 articles met their inclusion criteria showing significant correlation between road accidents and population density, number of junctions, student population, number of schools and pedestrian volume. A more integrated approach to evaluate all the variables that has lead to a particular accident needs to be considered for the policy makers to evaluate the risk factors and provide sufficient counter measures.

Due to the complex nature of the crash data including a vast quantity of information, data mining approaches are being applied by recent researchers to perform crash data analysis. Anurag and Mohamed (2009) applied this technique on crash reports from the state of Florida and discovered significant correlation between increase in traffic accidents during rainy times and roadways with straight sections and vertical curves. Also poor illumination resulted in higher crash severity. Decision tree based approaches towards identification of contributory factors in road traffic accidents and counter measures are discussed by Chang and Chen (2005), Harba et al (2009), Lee and Abdel (2005). A decision tree approach by Montella (2011) was performed on Italy crash data and they identified that the top most contributory factors leading to accidents were associated with road signage and markings. The author suggests that measures to improve signage in the sites with road geometric deficiencies could significantly reduce accidents. Chi-squared automatic integration detector (CHAID), a decision tree based method was employed by Hezaveh et al (2018) on crash data from Tennessee to identify association between pedestrian crash severity, road characteristics and environmental factors.

To understand the association between variables and handle missing data efficiently, Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) emerged as a technique which allowed looking at relations or associations that existed between the categorical variables in a dataset. One of the first literatures on the application of MCA for pedestrian vehicle crashes was published by Fontaine and Gourlet (1997). Their study was based on the fatal accidents report by the French police. They analyzed the variables of pedestrians involving age, sex, driving under influence, mode of transport and movements and identified four groups that has lead to pedestrian accidents. Factor et al. (2010) published a social order of road accidents using MCA by associating variables relating to social behavior of drivers and their engagement in accidents from Israeli road accidents records. MCA was applied on crash data from Illinois and Alabama, collected over a period of 15 years and factors such as driver/ road/ lighting conditions and driver age were found to be significant resulting in wrong way driving crashes by Jalayer et al (2018). Das et al (2018) applied similar MCA technique on 5 years crash data from Louisiana and discussed 16 significant clusters that resulted in crash and also suggested suitable countermeasures.

In this study, MCA was applied to vehicle pedestrian crash data from the RADMS database in Chennai city in 2016 to address three main objectives. Firstly, to identify the key factors associated with the crash. Secondly, to identify the distant or non-trivial factors associated with the key factors leading to crash. Lastly, to provide counter measures based on the MCA results to aid transportation safety researchers and workers in improving pedestrian safety.

2. Methodology

2.1. Vehicle Pedestrian Crash Data

Vehicle-Pedestrian crash data was compiled from a comprehensive road safety accident reporting database RADMS, established the Government of Tamil Nadu in 2009. RADMS is a software package developed to collect, analyze and map road accidents across the state with a multi department registry involving police, highways and local RTA departments. RADMS database consists of 105 fields to be filled by each department from which reports on driver, vehicle, road, enforcement, collision type, time period, alcohol usage, pedestrian, landmark and weather could be generated for analysis. In this study, pedestrian data in Chennai city using 24 variables that were relevant to this research were chosen. Each of these variables were of categorical type and was taken directly as observations for MCA. A summary of the selected variables and its frequency of occurrence is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of variables relating to pedestrian vehicle crash in Chennai City.

Variables and Categories	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage	Variables and Categories	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage
Severity			**Speed Limit**		
Fatal/Grievous	2050	60.01%	30 Km/hr	3	0.09%
No/Simple	1366	39.99%	35 Km/hr	16	0.47%
Collision Type			40 Km/hr	3359	98.33%
Head on	284	8.31%	50 Km/hr	37	1.08%
Hit from rear	79	2.31%	60 Km/hr	1	0.03%
Hit from side	168	4.92%	**Traffic Movement**		
Hit object	46	1.35%	One-way	51	1.49%
Hit pedestrian	2216	64.87%	Two-way	3365	98.51%
Others	616	18.03%	**No. of Lanes**		
Skidding	7	0.20%	1	2861	83.75%
Central Divider			2	517	15.13%
No	2202	64.46%	Greater than 2	38	1.11%
Yes	1214	35.54%	**Road Works**		0.00%
Road Category			No	3348	98.01%
Highway	2344	68.62%	Yes	68	1.99%
Not highway	305	8.93%	**Accident Cause**		
Unknown	767	22.45%	Alcohol abuse	9	0.26%
Road Condition			Animal involved in accident	3	0.09%
Good	3411	99.85%	Changing lane without due care	65	1.90%
Poor	5	0.15%	Dangerous overtaking	70	2.05%
Light Condition			Driving against flow of traffic	56	1.64%
Darkness	391	11.45%	High speed	2646	77.46%
Daylight	1464	42.86%	Inattentive turn	30	0.88%
Street light	769	22.51%	Injured in accidents	79	2.31%
And another entry	5	6	No details entered	42	1.23%
Unknown	792	23.19%	Non-respect of rights of way rules	416	12.18%

Variables and Categories	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage	Variables and Categories	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage
Weather Condition			**Junction Control**		
Cloudy	35	1.02%	Flashing signal	3	0.09%
Fine	3368	98.59%	Give way sign	9	0.26%
Rainy	13	0.38%	No control	201	5.88%
License Type			Not at junction	2538	74.30%
Full	2454	71.84%	Police officer	22	0.64%
No license	545	15.95%	Stop sign	25	0.73%
Unknown	417	12.21%	Traffic signals	618	18.09%
Driver Gender			**Vehicle Type**		
Female	46	1.35%	Bus	133	3.89%
Male	2192	64.17%	HGV	114	3.34%
Unknown	1178	34.48%	Human power vehicle	3	0.09%
Season			LMV	1006	29.45%
Autumn	879	25.73%	Motor cycle	1577	46.17%
Spring	885	25.91%	Unknown	583	17.07%
Summer	885	25.91%	**Driver Age**		
Winter	767	22.45%	<18	75	2.20%
Chennai Zone			>65	26	0.76%
East	608	17.80%	18-24	842	24.65%
North	597	17.48%	25-34	795	23.27%
South	1502	43.97%	35-44	447	13.09%
West	709	20.76%	45-54	258	7.55%
Time			55-64	111	3.25%
Early Morning	335	9.81%	**Pedestrian Age**		
Evening	722	21.14%	<18	198	5.80%
Midnight	209	6.12%	>65	425	12.44%
Morning	705	20.64%	18-24	151	4.42%
Night	831	24.33%	25-34	734	21.49%
Noon	614	17.97%	35-44	431	12.62%
Pedestrian Gender			45-54	495	14.49%
Female	801	23.45%	55-64	524	15.34%
Male	1726	50.53%	Unknown	458	13.41%
Unknown	889	26.02%	**Day Type**		
Hit and Run			Weekday	2451	71.75%
No	2614	76.52%	Weekend	965	28.25%
Unknown	288	8.43%			
Yes	514	15.05%			

From the four zones in Chennai (north, south, west and east) 3416 data points were reported in the database. Based on the preliminary analysis, the variables road condition, speed limit, traffic movement, number of lanes, road works, accident cause, weather condition and junction control were highly skewed. For example, it could be seen that 99.85% of the accidents occurred on good road conditions, 98.33% of the accidents occurred on roads with speed limit of 40 km/hr, 77.46% of accidents occurred due to high speeds, 98.51% occurred on a two-way traffic movement, 83.75% on a single lane road, 98.01% with no road works, 98.59% on fine weather conditions and 74.3% of accidents were not at junctions. The non skewed variables were accident severity, central divider, light conditions, season, accident zone, time, vehicle type, driver and pedestrian age. The number of categories in each variable in presented in Table 2. The missing values from the selected variables were replaced with the value "unknown" as seen in light condition, road category, license type, driver gender, pedestrian gender, hit and run cases, vehicle type, driver age and pedestrian age.

Table 2. Number of categories in each variable.

Variable	Number of Categories
Severity	2
Collision Type	7
Central Divider	2
Road Category	3
Road Condition	2
Light Condition	4
Speed Limit	5
Traffic Movement	2
No. of Lanes	3
Road Works	2
Accident Cause	10
Weather Condition	3
License Type	3
Driver Gender	3
Season	4
Zone	4
Time	6
Pedestrian Gender	3
Hit and Run	3
Junction Control	7
Vehicle Type	6
Driver Age	8
Pedestrian Age	8
Day Type	2

2.2. Multiple Correspondence Analysis

The methodology used in the study is an exploratory data analysis tool to analyze relationship and patterns between the categorical variables in a dataset. The observations in MCA are described by variables comprising of different levels or categories. MCA helps in understanding relationships between the variables instinctively using geometrical methods and represents each variables in a low dimension space. The most correlated variables are plotted as clusters together and the uncorrelated variables are plotted far from each other based on the correlation values. Similar to Principal Component Analysis (PCA), the Eigen values of calculated MCA describe the level of variables explained by each dimension. Large Eigen values map to a large total variation among the variables across its respective dimension. The variables with most explained variation in the data are plotted across dimension 1, followed by dimension 2 and so on. Mostly, the top two or three Eigen values explain most of the variance in the data, the dimensions higher than that are usually considered as redundant or noisy information.

2.3. Initial Data Analysis using MCA

In this study, 24 categorical variables from the crash data were considered and the dimension of the dataset was 3416x24. Each crash report was represented as rows in the data matrix and are called as transactions. The columns of the data matrix are the variables with its categorical values. The computations of MCA are performed using FactoMineR package of R programming language. This package has the tools to compute, summarize, visualize and describe data of both quantitative and categorical variables based on the dataset and application. Since the Eigen values from MCA computation describe the level of variation explained by each dimension, the Eigen values and % variance explained for the top 10 dimensions are tabulated in Table 3. As the number of dimensions increase a continuous decrease in the Eigen values and % variance could be seen. The first and the second principal dimensions explain about 14.5% of the total variation and the greater dimensions does not explain more than 2.5%. Hence the results of MCA on crash data are discussed based on data from dimension 1 and 2.

Table 3. Eigen values and explained variance for first 10 dimensions.

Dimension	Eigen Values	% Variance Explained	Cumulative % Variance Explained
1	0.2583	7.9468	7.9468
2	0.2125	6.5369	14.4837
3	0.0789	2.4289	16.9127
4	0.0765	2.3541	19.2667
5	0.0747	2.2981	21.5648
6	0.0678	2.0863	23.6511
7	0.0620	1.9081	25.5592
8	0.0592	1.8230	27.3822
9	0.0583	1.7926	29.1748
10	0.0564	1.7344	30.9092

The variables with the highest contribution from MCA computation could be found using this package and this value provides valuable insight while interpretation. From Table 1, it could be seen that the frequency of occurrence of "unknown" values under road category is 22.45%, light condition is 23.19%, license type is 12.21%, driver gender is 34.38%, pedestrian gender is 26.02%, hit and run is 8.43%, vehicle type is 17.07%, driver age is 25.23% and pedestrian age is 13.41%. Table 4 lists the highest contributing variables and its categories that are greater than 1% in both dimensions 1 and 2excluding the unknown categories.

Table 4. Variable contribution in dimensions 1 and 2 greater than 1%.

Variables	Contribution %
No. of Lanes - 2	6.1557
Junction Control - Traffic signals	5.8720
Collision Type - Others	5.5520
Accident Cause - Non-respect of rights of way rules	4.1180
Pedestrian Age - 25 to 34 years	3.5939
Driver Gender - Male	1.5242
Road Category - Highway	1.5176
Junction Control - Not at junction	1.4335
Central Divider - Yes	1.3971
Chennai Zone - East	1.3579

Variables	Contribution %
Collision Type - Hit pedestrian	1.1182
No. of Lanes - 1	1.073203

It should be noted that the contribution values of each variables will depend on the number of categories and the contribution of each categories as listed in Table 4 will depend on the number of accidents reported with the listed categories. These variables and its categories should be given high importance while deciding on the factors affecting pedestrian safety.

3. Results and Discussion

The plots to interpret the results of MCA across dimensions 1 and 2 was generated using ggplot2 package. The variable categories that are further away from the origin are the most discriminating variables and the ones clustered at the origin are probably less distinct. Based on the positioning of the variable clusters, different clouds were formed using the most discriminating variables and less distinct variables. The clouds formed with discriminating variables are shown as ellipses and less distinct variables are discussed in Fig 4 to Fig 9. These clouds form the category groups that most likely to have contributed to the crash. The clusters identified in the MCA plots from their distribution in plane 1 are discussed below explaining 14.5% of variance in the dataset.

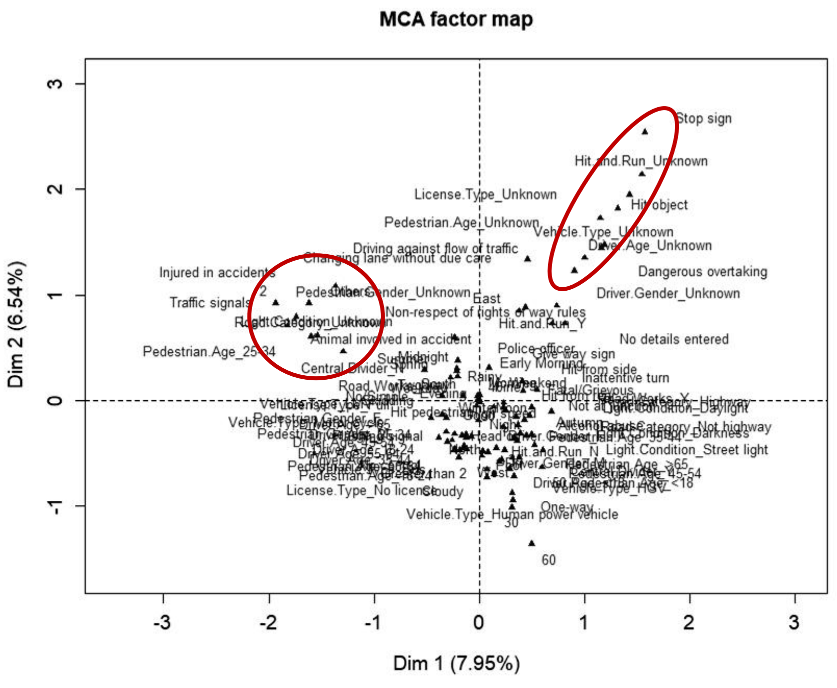

Fig. 1.Principal MCA plot between dimension 1 and dimension 2 for the variable categories.

First cloud forms association between four factors collision type, pedestrian age, accident cause and junction control. The association suggests that pedestrians in the age group of 25 to 34 are mostly injured in accidents at traffic signals where the cause of accident is usually due to non respect of the right way of rules. Counter measures such as guided pedestrian crossings, skywalk or subways could prevent accidents at the traffic junctions.

Second cloud forms association between cause of accidents and collision type. The factors identified in cause of accident categories are driving against the flow of traffic, changing lane without due care and dangerous overtaking. These factors have resulted in a collision type of hitting an object. The categories in this cloud are distinctly spread across dimension 2 making cause of accident as its top contributing variable. The association is made completely between the vehicles on road where colliding with an object has occurred mainly due to un-safe driving and overtaking.

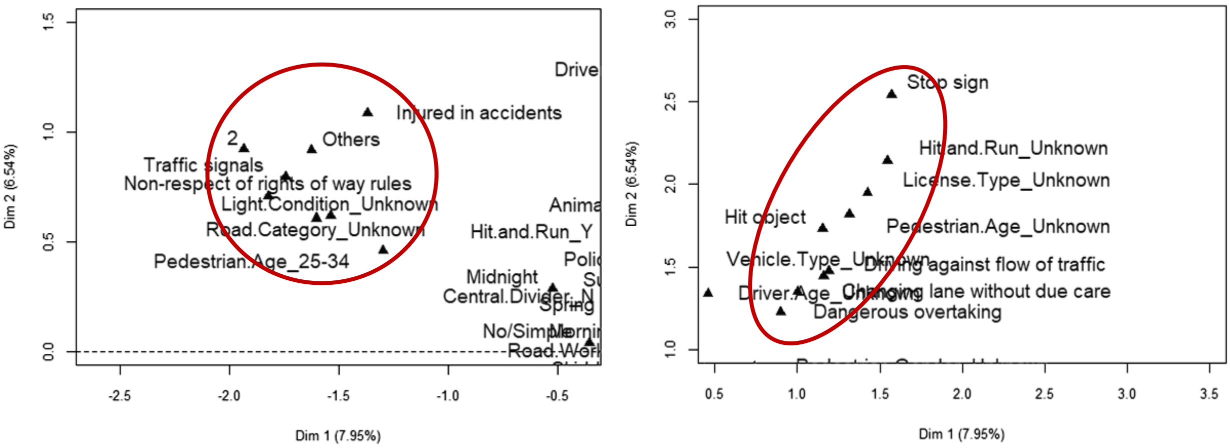

Fig. 2. (a) Cloud 1 of MCA factor map; (b) Cloud 2 of MCA factor map.

Third cloud associates with three variables collision type, cause of accident and weather conditions. This cloud suggests that during rainy weather conditions accidents relating to inattentive turning has lead to collision of vehicles from the side. This association also suggests that signals at traffic junctions may not provide sufficient safety while making turns especially during bad weather conditions. Increased safety interventions at such turns could prevent these type of collisions.

Fourth cloud forms association between injury severity, time of day and collision type. The association suggests that there is a high risk of fatal/ grievous injury occurrence during poor light conditions since the time of day is evening and night. Also the collision type associated with this cloud is getting hit from rear. Naturally night relates to dark conditions and hence counter measures like necessary lighting could prevent these crashes.

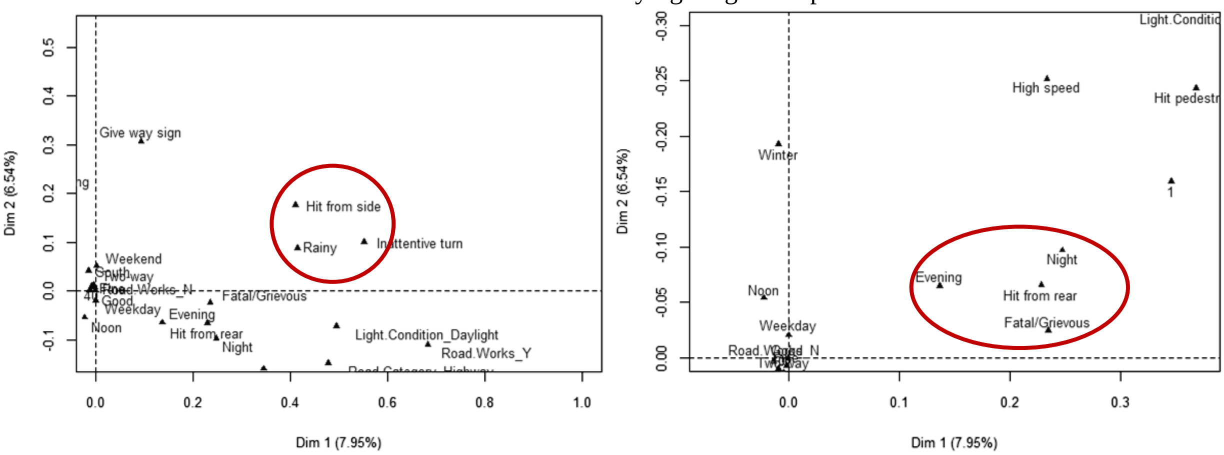

Fig. 3. (a) Cloud 3 of MCA factor map; (b) Cloud 4 of MCA factor map.

Fifth cloud associates Hit and Run, time of day, season, central divider and junction control. From this cloud an association that hit and run occurs during early mornings are formed. This could indirectly relate to driver fatigue or the confidence of the driver in not expecting pedestrians early morning on the roads. The occurrence of these crashes are also associated with summer and spring which is the first half of the year. Another interpretation of the cloud is that crashes are associated with the presence of central dividers, where the pedestrian could have been crossing at unmarked crossing zones. Presence of a police officer is also associated with this cloud. Improvement in speed control in early mornings and targeted pedestrian awareness and enforcement could help in reducing this type of crashes.

Sixth cloud associates all drivers and pedestrians involved in motor cycle accidents. Drivers of all age groups are associated in this cloud. Some other variable categories associated are flashing traffic signal and no junction control. Road with no controls will most likely contribute to accidents. This cloud stresses the importance of having a proper traffic signaling system and junction control to prevent accidents. The cloud also associates with north and west zones of Chennai city. These locations would require increased attention and installment of speed barriers, traffic management system and enforcement could minimize the occurrence of these crashes.

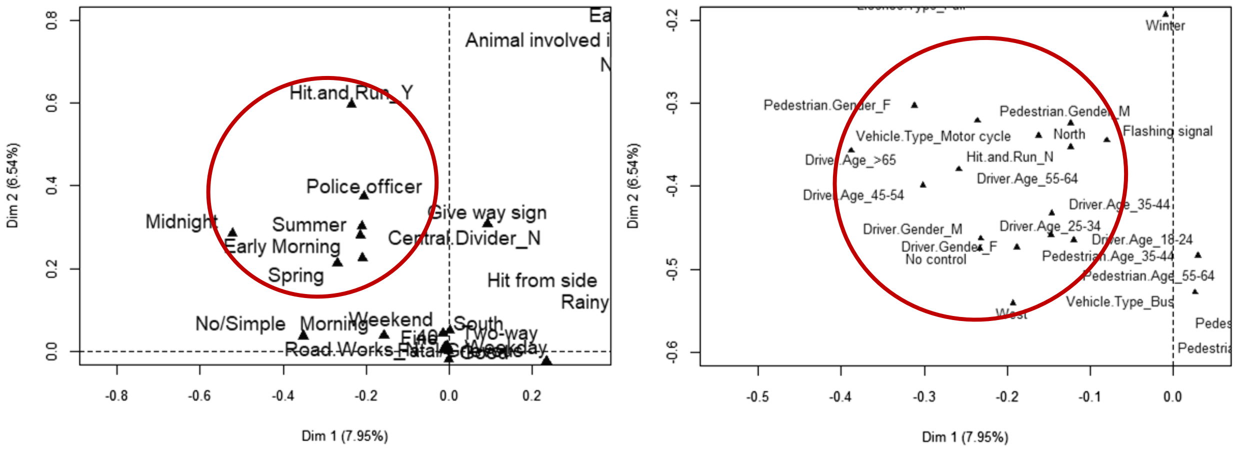

Fig. 4. (a) Cloud 5 of MCA factor map; (b) Cloud 6 of MCA factor map.

Seventh cloud associates pedestrians of all ages, head on collision type, bus and heavy goods vehicle type, roads with greater than 2 lanes and presence of a central divider. Pedestrian crashes and injuries are reported even in single lane roads, hence it becomes progressively dangerous for pedestrians on roadways with more than 2 lanes. Large vehicles tend to have difficulties in maneuvering to prevent pedestrian collisions if its sudden resulting in crashes. Hence, pedestrians must be enforced to use only the designated crossing areas that include traffic signal controls and the speed of the heavy vehicles should also be kept under the safety limits. Installation of warning systems, enforcement, traffic signage on speed controls could help prevent these accidents.

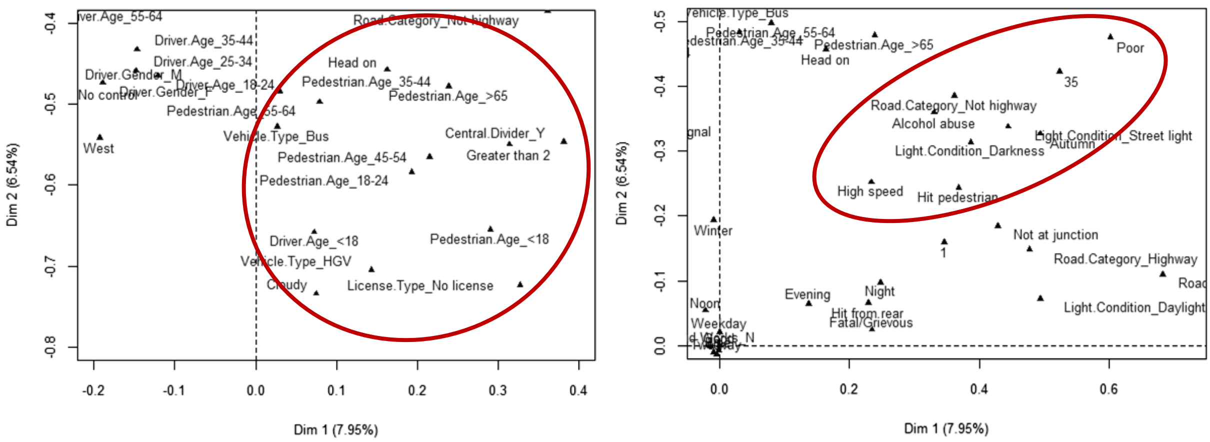

Fig. 5. (a) Cloud 7 of MCA factor map; (b) Cloud 8 of MCA factor map.

Eight cloud associates pedestrians crashes and high vehicle speeds where the speed limit is 35 km/hr in all road conditions. The crashes in this cloud is also associated with alcohol abuse. Poor road conditions and road works are also part of this cloud indicating that vehicles at high speeds in these road conditions will most likely lead to crashes. Poor light conditions or darkness is also associated with this cloud. Hence required lighting, proper diversions during road works, strict enforcement against drunk and driving could help prevent these crashes.

This study implemented MCA on Pedestrian vehicle crash data from the RADMS database of 2016 in Chennai city. MCA could provide as a valuable tool in identifying associated causes of a road accident from a large dataset of categorical variables and map them into lower dimension space.

Table 5. Significance of variables in dimension 1 and dimension 2.

Dimension 1			Dimension 2		
Variables	R2	p-value	Variables	R2	p-value
Collision Type	0.5929	<0.001	License Type	0.568695	<0.001
Road Category	0.7447	<0.001	Driver Gender	0.408233	<0.001
Light Condition	0.7133	<0.001	Hit and Run	0.535884	<0.001
No. of Lanes	0.6676	<0.001	Vehicle Type	0.459721	<0.001
Accident Cause	0.5587	<0.001	Driver Age	0.605638	<0.001
Junction Control	0.7076	<0.001	Pedestrian Age	0.670684	<0.001
Pedestrian Age	0.6134	<0.001	Pedestrian Gender	0.282709	<0.001
License Type	0.3364	<0.001	Collision Type	0.249672	<0.001
Vehicle Type	0.3176	<0.001	Accident Cause	0.244404	<0.001
Hit and Run	0.2217	<0.001	Zone	0.20725	<0.001
Pedestrian Gender	0.1932	<0.001	Junction Control	0.201141	<0.001
Driver Gender	0.1012	<0.001	Central Divider	0.164751	<0.001
Season	0.0936	<0.001	No. of Lanes	0.153489	<0.001
Severity	0.0824	<0.001	Light Condition	0.127403	<0.001
Central Divider	0.0801	<0.001	Road Category	0.110819	<0.001
Driver Age	0.0748	<0.001	Season	0.06784	<0.001
Time	0.0449	<0.001	Traffic Movement	0.011745	<0.001
Zone	0.0366	<0.001	Time	0.013815	<0.001
Road Works	0.0095	<0.001	Weather Condition	0.005608	<0.001
Speed Limit	0.0053	<0.001	Speed Limit	0.006827	<0.001
Traffic Movement	0.0015	0.024			

The significance of each variables in both dimension 1 and 2 is tabulated in Table 5. A greater association of the dimensions with its corresponding variables would have a high R^2 value and vice versa. Based on the correlation results it could be seen that dimension 1 has the five most dominant variables as pedestrian age, license type, vehicle type, hit and run and pedestrian gender. Dimension 2 has the five most dominant variables as pedestrian gender, collision type, accident cause, zone, and junction control.

4. Conclusion and Future Work

Many policy derivations and interventions are formulated based on understanding the key factors that influence in an accident. A data driven approach would provide as one of the methods in evaluating countermeasures to reduce accidents. Many driver/pedestrian related, environment related, road related factors are involved in each accidents. Hence just looking at the effect of one specific variable towards the cause of road accident will not be sufficient. From the results discussed it could be seen that MCA can provide as a valid tool for analyzing the complex nature of road accidents by associating all the necessary variables. In addition, MCA provides as an unsupervised tool and hence no prior information, hypothesis or an outcome is required for validating the results. This method reduces the dimensions of the entire dataset into lower dimension space and hence the association could be viewed as 2D or 3D plots and interpreted even by a less experienced person in data analytics.

In this study the significance of the variables with respect to the dimensions were discussed. However, the significance of the clouds itself were not computed. The key association findings from the MCA model could further be improved and validated objectively by means of clustering techniques like K-means or mapping algorithms. Though this approach, complex accident environments could be studied and valid countermeasures could be implemented by the transportation safety department in reducing accidents.

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